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ABSTRACT

Project BETA (Bilingual Education Talented Academy--Gifted and Talented) is a federally funded project serving gifted and talented limited-English-proficient students at two high schools in the Bronx, New York. The project focused in particular on Spanish-speaking students but also served students of at least 11 other language groups. Students received instruction in English as a Second Language, Native Language Arts, science, mathematics, social studies, computer science, and career education. The project provided staff development, curriculum development, and parental involvement activities. This report describes participating students, staff, project implementation, outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations. (JDD)

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OREA Report

BILINGUAL EDUCATION TALENTED ACADEMY--GIFTED AND TALENTED (PROJECT BETA)

Grant Number: T003L80059

1989-90

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

EC 300553

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION TALENTED ACADEMY--GIFTED AND TALENTED (PROJECT BETA) 1989-90

SUMMARY

- Project BETA was fully implemented. Students received instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.); Native Language Arts (N.L.A); and the content area subjects of science, mathematics, social studies, computer science, and career education. The project provided staff development, curriculum development, and parental involvement activities.

- Project BETA met its E.S.L. and attendance objectives. The project partially met its objectives for parental involvement. It failed to meet its objectives for the content area subjects, staff development, test development, and curriculum development. OREA could not assess the objective for N.L.A. career advisement because of a lack of data.

The Bilingual Education Talented Academy--Gifted and Talented (Project BETA) completed the second year of funding by Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.). The project served gifted and talented limited English proficient (LEP) students at Theodore Roosevelt and Christopher Columbus High Schools in the Bronx. Project BETA focused in particular on Spanish-speaking students but also served students of at least eleven other language groups.

The program offered students E.S.L., N.L.A. when available, content-area subjects taught with E.S.L. methodology, and computer literacy.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Reevaluate the passing rate for content area subjects, and if it is found to be unrealistic, set it lower.

- Develop tests and curriculum guidelines as proposed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report has been prepared by the Bilingual, Multicultural, and Early Childhood Evaluation Unit of the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of the Bilingual Education Talented Academy--Gifted and Talented (Project BETA), a program funded under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.). In its second year of operation, Project BETA provided gifted limited English proficient (LEP) students with courses and support services that would further their academic progress. Project BETA also posed objectives for curriculum and test development, staff development, and parental involvement. The project operated at Christopher Columbus and Theodore Roosevelt High Schools in the Bronx.

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

The project served 358 students in the program during the year. Of this number, 268 attended both semesters, 45 attended fall only, and 45 attended spring only. (Total fall attendance was 313; total spring attendance was 313.) Most of the students were recently arrived immigrants. There was a particularly large influx of students from the Soviet Union, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Program students had an average of eight years of education in their native country and an average of two years of education in the United States.

STAFF

The project director (with a master's degree) and three resource specialists were funded part-time by Title VII. One resource specialist had a master's degree, one had a doctorate,

and one was a medical doctor. Three paraprofessionals were funded full-time by Title VII and one was funded part-time.

Title VII personnel spoke a number of different languages, including Spanish, French, Arabic, Vietnamese, Italian, and Khmer. The Spanish-speaking paraprofessional helped students with writing and in E.S.L. computer tutorials. The Vietnamese-speaking resource specialist provided tutoring in content area courses.

Non-Title VII-funded personnel who worked with project students included an assistant principal, nine guidance counselors, a college advisor, a job coordinator, and two paraprofessionals.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

Project BETA served students who were proficient in their own language and had good grades but had scored at or below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB).

The project offered a number of levels of E.S.L., N.L.A., mathematics, and science classes. Project BETA also made optional educational activities available to students. At Christopher Columbus High School, six computer terminals were available to BETA students on a sign-up basis.

Project BETA's support services and noninstructional activities included career advisement, staff and curriculum development, and parental involvement.

III. OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL

English as a Second Language

- Eighty-five percent of the participating students will make statistically significant gains in English language proficiency as measured by the Language Assessment Battery.

Matching data were available for 222 students. The mean gain was 9.5 Normal Curve Equivalents (N.C.E.s) (s.d.=11.4), and analysis indicated a significant ($p<.05$) improvement between pretest and posttest scores.

Project BETA met its E.S.L. objective.

Native Language Arts

- A minimum of 85 percent of the students participating in Project BETA will demonstrate significant gains in native language achievement.

The objective could not be measured as stated, because the project did not provide pretest/posttest scores. However, N.L.A. course passing data were available for 95 students in the fall and 138 students in the spring. In the fall semester, 83 percent of the students (N=79) achieved a final passing grade of 85 or higher; in the spring, 74 percent of the students (N=102) achieved a grade of at least 85 or higher.

OREA could not evaluate this N.L.A. objective as stated.

Content Area Subjects

- A minimum of 85 percent of the students enrolled in content area subjects (mathematics, science, social studies, computer science and career education) will receive final course grades of at least 85.

In neither semester and in no subject area did 85 percent of participating students receive grades of 85 or higher. (See Table 1.) Project BETA failed to meet its content area objective.

TABLE 1

Student Achievement in Content Area Courses

	Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
Subject	Number of Students	Percent Receiving Grades of At Least 85	Number of Students	Percent Receiving Grades of At Least 85
Mathematics	266	53.4	263	50.6
Science	200	46.5	214	44.4
Social Studies	258	54.3	253	61.7
Career Education	94	60.6	137	65.7

- A much lower percentage of students than expected received grades of at least 85.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL

Attendance

- Project students' attendance will be significantly higher than that of mainstream students.

The project students' attendance rate was significantly higher than that of mainstream students ($p<.05$). (See Table 2.) The project met its attendance objective.

TABLE 2

Attendance Rates of Program and Mainstream Students by School

High School	Program		Mainstream
	Number of Students	Percent Attendance	Percent Attendance
Christopher Columbus	181	92.1	79.1
Theodore Roosevelt	156	92.9	79.3

- Program students' attendance rate was significantly higher than that of mainstream students ($p<.05$).

Career Advisement

- All project students will meet the resource talent specialist on an individual basis for advisement at least two times during the school year for career orientation and planning.

Ten students per day were scheduled to meet with the resource specialist for advisement. Although the resource specialist provided counseling services, the program did not provide the specific information necessary to evaluate the career advisement objective as written.

Staff Development

- Five program staff members will enroll in at least one credit-bearing university course each semester.

During the fall semester two staff members from Theodore Roosevelt High School attended a university course, and in the spring three staff members from the same school attended a university course. No staff members from Christopher Columbus High School attended a university during the year. Project BETA did not meet its staff development objective.

Test Development

- The project staff will have developed at least two appropriate testing instruments in the native languages of the project students in order to properly identify and place the gifted and talented bilingual high school student.

The project did not develop any testing instruments. The project failed to meet its test development objective.

Curriculum Development

- By the end of the second project year, the curriculum specialists will have developed four additional interdisciplinary subject-matter curriculum guidelines for teaching science, social studies, math and computer science for the gifted and talented bilingual high school student in English and in the native languages.

At Christopher Columbus High School, the program was developing a mathematics curriculum; at Theodore Roosevelt High School, it was developing a mathematics review guide for the Regents Competency Test (R.C.T.). Project BETA did not meet its objective in curriculum development.

Parental Involvement

- The project will offer classes in E.S.L. which will include issues and concerns in dealing with the gifted and talented bilingual student to at least 60 parents of project students.

The project offered classes in E.S.L. to parents and siblings of BETA participants. It was unclear, however, how many parents attended the classes. OREA was therefore unable to evaluate the first parental involvement objective.

- Parents of project students will demonstrate more parental involvement than parents of mainstream students by demonstrating 10 to 15 percent higher attendance at school functions, as indicated by school records.

Ninety-nine parents of project students and 77 parents of mainstream students attended workshops at the school. The number of parents of project students attending school functions exceeded the number of mainstream students' parents by far more than the projected 10-15 percent. Thus, Project BETA met its second parental involvement objective.

FOLLOW-UP OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

During the course of the year, 33 students graduated and 71 transferred to another program or school. One student left the United States, and six others dropped out of school. There were no data on the academic achievement of former program participants.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In its second year of implementation, Project BETA continued to serve the needs of the bilingual gifted LEP student population.

Operating at two high schools in the Bronx, the project provided instruction in E.S.L., N.L.A., the content area subjects, and career education. The project met its objectives for E.S.L. and attendance and one of its two objectives for parental involvement. It failed to meet its objectives for the content area subjects, staff development, test development, and

curriculum development. OREA could not evaluate one of the parental involvement objectives or the objectives for N.L.A. and career advisement because of a lack of necessary data.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Reevaluate the passing rate for content area subjects, and if it is found to be unrealistic, set it lower.
- Develop tests and curriculum guidelines as proposed.